

## Distribution Practices in the Pet Medications Industry

Veterinarians are the primary advocate for the owner and patient. To ensure absolute safety and correct usage of prescription preventative products, product diversion must be eliminated. Certain companies do try to restrict product diversion through various methods, including track and trace technology. However, unethical veterinarians, wholesalers, and online retailers do find ways around anti-diversion efforts in an effort to profit from prescription sales, despite the intentions of manufacturers regarding distribution. I do not understand how this is not illegal. The bottom line is participants in illegal product diversion have only one interest in mind --- money. Ultimately, the pets safety is compromised due to unregulated product flow. Furthermore, the veterinary profession is "cheapened" and the pets only true advocate is purported to be " the greedy bad guy" due to our desire for product distribution regulation as intended by the manufacturer.

Regarding product safety and patient liability, I regularly have clients who obtain illegally diverted products and imported products without a prescription (Reference: Joe's Pet Meds.com and Petshed.com). Veterinary supervision and wisdom are circumvented. I have also treated many patients for toxicity after incorrect product usage by an uneducated consumer with good intentions.

Finally, online retailers do not currently have to collect sales tax on product sales, creating an unfair marketing advantage for them concerning absolute consumer price. In addition, I regularly see products sold online for what amounts to my cost, leading me to question the product validity and safety, not to mention the marketing strategies of said online companies.